



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE See/Davis Canyon Fuel Break

PROJECT LOCATION T31S, R11E, Sec. 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 & T31S, R12E, Sec. 18, 19, MDBM **COUNTY** San Luis Obispo

LEAD AGENCY California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

CONTACT Andrew Hubbs

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project will create an approximately 80' wide ridgeline shaded fuel break extending about 2 1/2 miles from the Davis Peak area southeast to near the termination of the ridgeline separating See and Davis Canyons near Avila Beach. Approximately one mile of an existing shrub covered road will be opened as well. A mechanical mulcher will be used to open the road and open a "P-line" down the ridgeline in order to provide access for hand crews. Due to steep slopes just off the ridgeline, the mulcher will only operate on approximately 10-30 feet in the center of the ±80' wide fuelbreak. The remainder of the fuelbreak area will be treated by hand crews that will cut excess material consisting almost entirely of shrubs and drag this material to the ridgeline accessible by the mulcher where the machine will dispose of the material by mulching. This method is using the mulcher more as a mobile chipper than as the primary treatment tool. Of the entire area proposed for treatment, it is estimated that approximately 70% (15-20 ac) will be treated by hand crews and the remaining 30% on the ridgeline (6-10 ac) will be treated by mechanical mulching. All material not mulched will be piled on site and burned in accordance with a San Luis Obispo County APCD approved Smoke Management Plan. Larger trees will remain, with scattered smaller trees and shrubs spaced apart approximately 1 1/2 times their height. No trees over 6" dbh are proposed for removal, unless needed for access or safety reasons, with retained trees generally pruned to a height of 8 feet. Project size is estimated at 30 acres. It is anticipated the mastication operations of the fuel break will be conducted in late summer, fall or during extended dry periods in the winter or early spring when conditions are such that damage to soils is not likely. Hand crew work supplementing mastication will occur during this period as well, with additional cutting and piling occurring intermittently throughout the year.

Reoccurring hand crew maintenance is planned for the proposed project, however the preparation of additional environmental documents will occur at least every five years; while consultation with DFG or State Parks biologists and a CNDDB query will occur annually for any required maintenance work. Brush disposal from maintenance activities will occur in the form of pile burning or chipping.

EXEMPTION STATUS

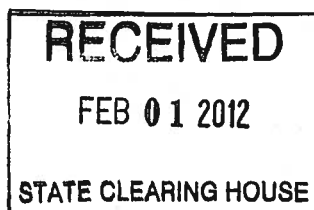
- ☒ **Categorical Exemption** Type/Section: Class 4 §15304 Minor Alterations to Land
- ☐ **Statutory Exemption** (state code section):
- ☐ **Ministerial** (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- ☐ **Declared Emergency** (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- ☐ **Emergency Project** (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

The work proposed is a minor alteration to vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and is consistent with Categorical Exemption Class 4 - Minor Alterations to Land. No activity is proposed that is listed as a limitation under CCR 15300.2 (a-f). The proposed project will remove enough brush to break up the horizontal continuity of fuels and reduce ladder fuels. Scattered shrubs will remain over most of the project area and no trees over 6" dbh are proposed for removal unless needed for access or safety reasons.

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact or any cumulative impact will occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at 635 N. Santa Rosa Street, San Luis Obispo, Ca.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING



William E. Snyder 1/31/12
William E. Snyder, Deputy Director Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection